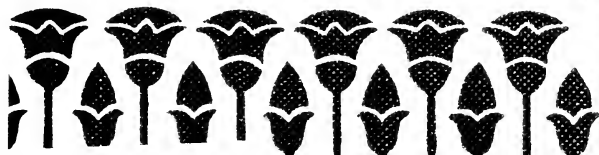


# AT THE SIGN OF THE SPHINX

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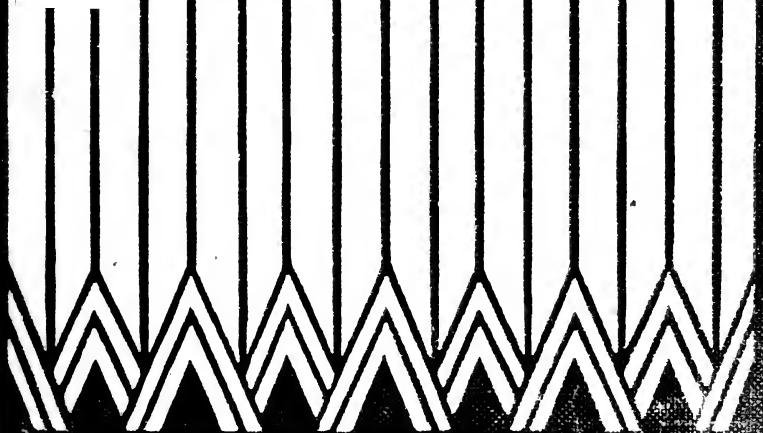
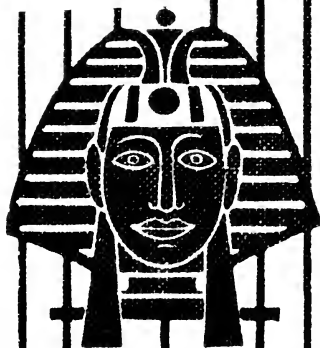
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*Mary A Kenney.*







AT THE SIGN OF THE SPHINX





BY CAROLYN WELLS

"Heyday a Riddle! Neither good nor bad!"  
KING RICHARD III. iv. 4.

*SECOND SERIES*



NEW YORK

1906

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Published August, 1906

TO  
WILLIAM BELLAMY



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# At the Sign of the Sphinx

Second Series





## *At the Sign of the Sphinx*

### I

THE time has come. The waiting populace  
Breathlessly watch him as he slowly  
mounts  
The scaffold. Though his timid, trembling steps  
Betoken fear, with calm and steady gaze  
He sees my whole above his head. So  
bright!  
So glittering! On that his eyes are fixed.  
Garbed all in white, a rope about his  
waist,  
My first upon his feet; silent, although  
He suffers agonies untold. But hark!  
He calls for drink. By some kind hand  
is passed  
To him a brimming tumbler, and within  
He sees my last and he is glad. He  
drinks,  
Then once again turns to my whole.  
Brave man!

He fears not death, but murmurs to  
himself:

“This only I desire, that when I die  
Men say I did my work and did it well.”

THE scene was merry, bright and gay  
As I came to my first one day.  
Beside my last I saw a lass  
Dispense refreshment in a glass.  
She was my first. "My last," said I,  
"I'll take a drink, for I am dry."  
Smiling, as she the goblet passed,  
She said, "Here you my first my last."  
"My whole," said I, "ere I depart,  
I'll say that there is in my heart  
(Just here the word must be reversed—)  
A wish for your my last my first."

**M**Y first is now before us, my second is here  
too;  
My whole is now here also,—and yet  
that 's not quite true.  
My first is,—no, what *is* it? That is for  
you to say;  
And where 's my second, tell me, yes, tell  
me that, I pray,  
And I will tell you truly, that though you  
look around,  
You cannot see my whole because it 's  
nowhere to be found.

4

THE dusky shadows deepened and the  
night was drawing on,  
A weary maiden watched my dying first,  
so nearly gone;  
She mused awhile in silence, then to her-  
self she spake,  
“Ah, me, but when to-morrow dawns I  
know my first will break.”

The youth rode on. Like Scott's brave  
knight he stayed not for my last;  
He lingered not, nor faltered, but pressed  
onward hard and fast.  
Alas! he took the downward course with  
many dangers rife;  
But just in time he used my last and so he  
saved his life.

My whole, by artists painted and by poets  
often sung,  
Thou hast across the Orient thy royal  
banners flung.  
Thy wonders and thy glories we travel  
miles to see,  
And the benighted wanderer oft sighs in  
vain for thee.

## 5

**M**Y first, thou 'rt beautiful. Thy noble  
brow,  
Thy curving mouth, and straight and  
classic nose,  
All, all are dear to me. And though thou  
hast  
But scanty raiment, though both arms are  
gone,  
And though some toes are missing, even  
thus,  
To those who know thee and who love  
thee well,  
Thou art a thing of beauty and a joy.

An ancient poet, famous for his lyre,  
With death was threatened by some  
wicked rogues.  
Courageously escaping from their clutch,  
He rode triumphantly upon my whole,  
Swiftly propelled and balanced by my last.

**M**Y first in childhood is unknown,  
To us 'tis by experience shown;  
It has a prominent position  
Wherever there 's an Exhibition.

My last, though old and like to die,  
Perhaps possessing but one eye;  
Are of small value, people say,  
And pass them carelessly each day.  
*D* stands for them, and I have found  
Them often in the common pound.

My whole, men struggle to control,  
And with my last they meet my whole.

## 7

**M**Y first, although of use to men  
Is scarcely worth a stiver;  
But when a twin, it cannot then  
Be managed by a driver.

My first 's my second and my third,  
A thread is wound around it;  
I lost it once, and on my word,  
'T was by my whole I found it.



**M**Y first is a letter in juxtaposition;  
My second 's a letter in Syro-Phœnician;  
My third is a letter in fanfaronade;  
My fourth is a letter in rhodomontade;  
My fifth is a letter in comicalness;  
My whole combines gain and desirable-  
ness.

## 9

**M**Y first was a hapless queen  
Who died one day in Spring;  
My first might stand before an Earl  
But never before a King.

My second is Erin's luck,  
The end of all success;  
My third is a Scandinavian god  
Who succoured those in distress.

Scientists disagree  
About the immortal soul;  
But Evolution seems to prove  
We're descended from my whole.

**M**Y first was into prison cast,  
An angel made my first my last.  
My first was hanged; with silent tread  
The mourners came to view the dead.  
Fair Enid, so the legends say,  
Upon my total rode away.

## I I

**M**Y powerful first, thou standest in thy stall,  
Many a man is held beneath thy thrall;  
And men for thee will fortunes gladly  
    spend,  
And yet by man thou 'rt bound and boxed  
    and penned.  
He stamps upon thee, puts thee on the  
    rack,  
And markest thee with stripes across thy  
    back.

My second, goodly joys thou canst convey,  
Gladly we take thy round from day to day;  
Made of coarse clay, and often underbred,  
Dear to the heir, yet buried with the dead.

My whole, what honored titles thou hast  
    borne,  
Designed for use, thou also dost adorn;  
Allowed to roam, yet kept within the  
    bound,  
By thine assistance oft the lost is found.

12

WHEN out from the clouds the sun had  
burst,  
My first of the people went to my first.

My second and third may be covered with  
sod,  
And one in each town is given to God.

My whole is a dire and terrible deed  
Of which in History we may read.

'T WAS not my whole,—and yet the King  
was there.

A fate hung in the balance. Suddenly  
My second fell! A burning flush of  
shame

Showed on the man's pale face. He  
looked aghast,

And cried, "I can't retract, but I confess  
My fault, and beg forgiveness of my  
first."

14

WHEN at an inn I stopped to dine  
Mine host brought out some rare old wine,  
It was a bottle of his best,  
My first and second it possessed,  
In peace I ate and drank my fill,  
Then asked the waiter for my bill,  
My whole was charged! I looked quite  
blank,  
My whole I neither ate nor drank.

I HAD two gardeners who to work were  
loath,  
But straightway to my first I sent them  
both.  
Such lazy fellows! Yet I must admit  
A lazier one could be,—my second's it.  
The ancients' art my whole doth represent,  
A perfect figure softly curved and bent.



16

**H**ENRY the Eighth grew tired of life  
With Catherine, his lawful wife.  
But for divorce he 'd no decree;  
Enraged, the King cried, "One, two,  
three!"

But soon my first gave up her soul,  
Her body was no more my whole.

**A** SAD, mad maiden, with a fair, sweet face  
Offered my first, and called it herb of  
grace.

My last is made of common clay, but then  
He 's liked extremely by his fellow-men.

When I would seek instruction for my  
soul,  
I take my prayer-book down and read  
my whole.

18

ONE gained and kept the foremost place,  
And by my first he won the race.

My second is exceeding black  
And often follows after Jack.

In old mythology we read  
My whole was served by Ganymede.

**A**N old philosopher was my last,  
And his wife was my first in the distant  
past.

Select two sticks that are smooth and  
straight,  
Lay them with care and precision great,  
One north and south, one east and west,  
They are my whole, it must be confessed.

**T**O the grandest of monarchs that ever was  
seen

My first was presented by Sheba's fair  
queen.

Far, far away back in the ages long past,  
According to science, the earth was my  
last.

My whole, on a rock, is reputed to be  
A danger encountered by sailors at sea.

A WISE old proverb advises all  
To catch my last if my first should fall.  
A poet, who with genius glowed,  
Wrote to my whole a famous ode.

**M**Y last are celebrated, noted, learned:  
Some will not come for years, and some  
are gone—

Ah, never to return. And only one  
We may with truthfulness assert, exists.  
And yet my first can buy them, eat them  
too,  
And set them if he choose; and upon one  
Of them he may perhaps send forth my  
whole;  
Or on it may perhaps inscribe my whole;  
Or on my whole he may inscribe my last.

WHETHER in winter's cold or summer's  
heat

My lady trails my first along the street.

My second figures in a certain nine;  
One of a celebrated Roman line.

Scientists have a theory that my third  
Makes music,—but it never has been  
heard.

A couple of my whole go to a ball;  
And on my whole is room enough for all.



**M**Y first is made of clay  
And holds a growing palm;  
My second brings a day  
When **all** the air seems balm;  
My whole is quite a clever feat  
Performed by many a young athlete.

**M**Y first 's possessed by men and dogs and  
goats,  
By houses, churches, books and hats and  
coats.

My second was a maiden young and fair,  
Entrusted to a guardian's watchful care.

He who 's my whole cannot achieve great  
fame;  
Read my whole backward and it spells  
the same.

**M**Y first, though scrutinized with close  
inspections

Is found above all human imperfections.  
I hold it in my hand,—yet though polite,  
'Tis of no use to me while in my sight.  
But still 'tis felt, and in my secret soul  
Upon reflection, I commend my whole.  
Now nothing can describe my second  
better

Than the last part of a well-written letter.  
My whole cannot escape his fate so sad,  
Tradition tells us all his race goes mad.

**M**Y first 's a sum of money that I have never  
seen

Though I have earned it often and spent  
it too, I ween.

When money is my second 't is often  
hard to get;

My second is a pretty sight, although it 's  
rather wet.

My whole 's a sad misfortune caused by  
a summer rain;

It makes much trouble in my first, and  
goes against the grain.

**T**O Sodom and Gomorrah on the plain  
Was sent a fiery storm of brimstone rain;

When o'er the towns the fearful torrent  
burst,

One was destroyed, the other was my  
first.

My last we waste and spend, but cannot  
save;

And on it we'll be carried to our grave.

My whole the rich and poor alike may  
claim,

But soon it will possess another name.

**T**O win my first men struggle all their  
lives,—  
Yet willingly present it to their wives.

The wise man no great fortune has  
amassed,  
But lives his life contented with my last.

An infant is my whole at early age;  
And Lot's wife was my whole on Script-  
ure's page.

30

**M**EN travel in my first,  
Although perhaps it's risky;  
My first goes round on wheels,  
Though not exactly frisky.

Some may detest charades,  
And puzzles may distress them,  
But still they must admit  
It takes my last to guess them.

Now all that I have said  
Is useless in the telling,  
Unless you take the word  
According to its spelling.

But if you would prefer  
A varied information,  
We'll now divide it up  
By its pronunciation.

And then we see my first,  
Scaly and sticky-jointed  
Upon a rounded base,  
And very neatly jointed.

My second then becomes  
A horned beast, and hairy;  
Or else a lovely lace,  
Fit to bedeck a fairy.

When merry Yuletide comes,  
And Christmas joys returning,  
In the old hall we'll sit,  
And watch my total burning.



31

THERE was a bachelor in days of old,  
Who wished to get himself a wife, we 're  
told.

And so desirous of a wife was he,  
He started off to London, one, two, three.

He must have found one to delight his  
soul,  
Because soon after they returned my  
whole.

**M**Y first, before the fray had ceased,  
Offered my whole for my last beast;  
Or Shakespeare tells us so at least.

33

**M**Y first is given and received, a blessing  
and a bane;  
You may buy it at the station, get it gratis  
on the train;  
You may find it in a puppet-booth or in  
a banquet-hall,  
And I think perhaps the Roman is the  
noblest of them all.

'Twas in my second, long ago, brave men  
put out to sea;  
And at a garden-fête I saw my second  
flowing free;  
And I leaned against my second of strong  
and solid oak,  
But as I grasped my second, alas, it  
dropped and broke.

My whole at Christmas seasons with holly  
we entwine;  
Upon the old Whig taverns 't was painted  
as a sign;  
But in its depths lurk dangers, from its  
floating cakes of ice  
To its balmy breath of sugar-cane, its  
tropic fruits and spice.

ONCE I passed through my whole. 'T was  
beautiful;  
'T was like a fairy-land, so gay, so glad,  
So free from care and sorrow. For a  
time  
I staid. Yet eagerly desired the day  
When I might leave its simple joys. Ah  
me,  
If but I might return to them again!  
My first is always in my whole. Some-  
times  
My first is in my last. When, long ago,  
Red Ridinghood on kindly errand bent,  
Walked to her grandam's cot across the  
wood,  
My last was on my first.

35

**A** SPIRIT rising in the air, continued still  
to fight;

It was my first, who, when alive, put sav-  
age hordes to flight.

And for my total, years had filled the  
Romans with my last,

And at his grim and ghastly blade the  
conquerors looked aghast.

**M**Y first a well known character on ancient  
history's page;  
His wooden effigy is sold for youth of  
tender age.  
My second's very wicked, and Holy Writ  
declares  
Of those who made my second and the  
punishing she bears.  
My whole hangs from the branching trees,  
Swayed lightly by a passing breeze.

37

**I**N gorgeous splendor, once upon a time  
My second reigned in Afric's sunny clime;  
A slave provoked his monarch's royal ire,  
And stood before him under sentence dire.  
"My first, my last," he stammered, "pity  
me!  
Must I obey thy horrible decree?  
Oh, thou who over millions hast control—"  
One word the magnate uttered, 't was my  
whole.

**G**REAT Shakespeare was my first; yet  
when he died  
He left my first. By loving hands his  
clay  
Was laid my second in the tomb. And  
now  
His tombstone to the traveler seems to  
speak,  
And say, "My second! here 's my first! "  
The fair Ophelia, gentle, hapless soul,  
Sank to a watery grave beneath my whole.



**M**Y first was a scholarly Scotchman of note,  
Discourses and essays he learnedly wrote,  
My second was found in the post, such a  
scrawl!  
That letter never was opened at all.  
My third 's made of flesh and sinew and  
bone,  
My first, I suppose had two of his own;  
My whole is a man delightful to folks  
Who enjoy reading jocular jingles and  
jokes.

**A**T my first was my friend.  
We went for my last;  
I'd a half-hour to spend,  
At my first was my friend;  
As we went round the bend  
O'er my total we passed.  
At my first was my friend,  
We went for my last.

41

AH, distinctly I remember  
'T was my first and not December,  
And each separate dying ember wrought  
its ghost upon the floor,

Eagerly I wished the morrow,  
Vainly I had sought to borrow  
In my last, surcease of sorrow, sorrow for  
the lost Lenore.

For my whole so rare and radiant,  
Whom the angels name Lenore—  
Nameless here forevermore.

SAFE from the cold December storm,  
I sat by my whole so bright and warm,  
When the cry of my first I plainly heard.  
My last sprang up without a word;  
And panic-stricken, in sudden fright,  
We rushed out into the winter night.

43

**M**EN often strive my first to gain  
By strength or skill, by speed or worth;  
It causes deepest woe and pain,  
It causes also joy and mirth.

I watched a tennis-player serve,  
And through the air the ball whizzed fast,  
But took an unexpected curve;  
The umpire said it was my last.

With thoughtful eyes and puzzled brow,  
It is my whole you 're reading now.

**B**ENEATH the Roman Eagle's glory,  
Great Cæsar, famed in song and story,  
Triumphant banners floating o'er him,  
Carried my Roman first before him.

In springtime days of sunny weather,  
When lads and lassies dance together,  
Around the May-pole gaily flying,  
They are my last, there 's no denying.

A gallant knight and lovely lady  
Were sauntering down a pathway shady;  
He offered her, with words beguiling,  
My whole, which she accepted, smiling.

**A** SOLDIER of the rebels lay dying in the field;  
A brave but sturdy fighter, he could fall  
but could not yield.  
But a comrade stood beside him while his  
life-blood trickled fast,  
And bent, with pitying glances, to wrap  
him in my last,  
Seeking his country's glory, e'en in the  
cannon's mouth.  
Though in the midst of bloodshed, my  
first stood for the South.  
The dying soldier faltered as he took his  
comrade's hand,  
Saying, "Make my whole, my brother,  
it is my last command."

**H**OPING my first kind Heaven will send  
her,

The suppliant prays on bended knee.  
Like Little Billee, "young and tender,"

We all desire my last shall be.  
So that she might become my whole  
God breathed in Eve a living soul.



47

**D**OROTHY DAUBER sat serene,  
Painting my total on a screen,  
When a little mouse went scampering o'er  
Dorothy Dauber's yellow floor.  
Dorothy, with a piercing cry,  
Clambered up on a table high;  
My first went madly rushing past  
Waving vigorously my last.  
Such a commotion in the house,  
And all on account of a little mouse.

**M**Y first, of high degree,  
Thousands succumb to thee—  
In Oriental countries thou art found;  
Beneath thy mighty power  
Thy fainting victims cower,  
Thy greatness brings them prostrate to the  
ground.

Unhonored and unsung,  
My second was, when young,  
Beheaded by a tyrant's stern decree;  
Her home and friends she left,  
Her children were bereft,  
Yet martyred in a worthy cause was she.

In far Afghanistan,  
In China and Japan,  
On Greenland's ice and India's coral strands;  
My whole in mighty hordes,  
So history records,  
Worship their idols in barbaric bands.

**I**N a little old school-house that stood on  
a hill

A little old schoolmaster taught with a  
will.

But over his pupils he had no control;  
They said he was crusty and cross and  
my whole.

And the rascals declared it would serve  
him just right

To play him a practical joke some fine  
night.

So down to the river they went, and they  
took

My first from my last of the dark, muddy  
brook.

Then they eagerly hurried, yet still as a  
mouse,

Till they came to the little old school-  
master's house.

They smuggled my first in my last with  
great glee,

And chuckled to think how irate he would  
be.

**L**EAVING my whole with grief and pain  
Columbus sailed across the main.  
He came at last to western lands  
And saw the Red Men's savage bands.  
They were my last, they were my first,  
Columbus' fears were then dispersed.

51

**F**ROM history's truthful page,  
We all of us may know  
My first was strongly built  
Thousands of years ago.  
The books of ancient lore  
We read again and see  
That long before my first  
My whole was said to be.

And people who lived then,  
Had surely never heard  
Of the 20th century  
My second and my third.

**M**Y grandsire in the Mayflower came across  
the raging waters,  
And so I sought to join the Revolutionary  
Daughters.  
I studied up my pedigree, and when my  
search was ended,  
I learned to my chagrin that from my  
first I had descended.

The cashier left his books in wild confu-  
sion and disorder,  
And started to my last across the far Cana-  
dian border.

My whole is used by artisans of every  
clime and nation,  
The blacksmith's need, the mason's pride,  
the school-girl's detestation.

53

**T**HE breaking waves dashed high,  
The vessel rose and fell;  
My first was drenched from end to end  
With every heavy swell.

The vivid lightning flashed,  
The awful thunder boomed.  
“Unless my last is sent to us,”  
The captain said, “we ’re doomed.”

The tempest cleared away  
Before the morning light.  
“Within my whole,” the captain said,  
“I ’ve not seen such a night.”

**M**Y first, with the meek brown eyes,  
In whose orbs a shadow lies,  
Standing with reluctant feet  
Where the brook and river meet,  
If where wild-flowers blossom rank,  
You my last upon the bank,  
Down the hillside you may roll  
And play havoc with my whole.



55

**M**Y first, men call thee wicked, and perhaps  
they may be right,  
Yet I contend thou shouldst be judged  
according to thy light.

My last, thou art a messenger received  
with joy or dread,—  
Frequently driven, very deaf, found in an  
humble shed.

My whole, of upright bearing, and found  
in many lands,  
In order to be seen of men, upon street-  
corners stands.

**T**HE vast hosts of Egypt, at Pharaoh's decree,  
All blazing in armor marched down to the sea.  
The plot was devised in a moment of rage,  
By my last, who committed my first  
'gainst a sage.  
A dry way through the sea for the hosts  
was revealed;  
But this availed naught, for their dark  
doom was sealed;  
The furious billows no power could control,  
And 'neath the dark waters they soon were  
my whole.

## 57

CLAD in his ermine and his robes of state,  
The haughty king in pomp and splendor  
sate.

And 'mong the crowds which thronged  
the regal chair,

My first approached, and looked upon him  
there,

She, too, with white-furred robe and gen-  
tle mien,

And noble air and countenance serene.

"What does she here?" grumbled a  
doughty knight.

The king replied, "The world hath said  
she might."

I walked across a sunny field one day,  
And saw an old man working by the way.

"How is my last, old man?" I gaily said.

"My last?" said he, and bent his grizzled  
head.

"How is my last?" I said it o'er again.

"My last?" he said (he seemed per-  
plexed), and then—

"Is my last good?" I asked of him once  
more.

"Fine, sir," he said; "better than e'er  
before."

Across the ocean's wave my total lies;  
And, as Lord Tennyson in verse implies,  
Is dull and undesirable; but still,  
I 'd gladly travel there, had I my will.

**M**Y first, a graceful shape, a lady fair,  
Walking the earth, suspended in the air;  
Shrill-voiced and brazen-tongued, low-  
toned and sweet,  
Shining and dull, discordant and discreet.

The jolly fisherman, his day's work o'er,  
Walks with his string of fish along the  
shore;  
Knowing they 'll make a bountiful repast,  
He proudly takes them homeward to my  
last.

Once in my whole a lovely maiden swung,  
And ever since we've heard her praises  
sung.

**A** WELL known ballad has rehearsed  
The placid waters of my first.  
The hero bold, his noble friend,  
The heroine's sad, untimely end,  
Why by a traitor was immersed  
Beneath the waters of my first.  
Another ballad I could name  
Describes the doings of a dame;  
Her home-life, and her walks abroad,  
And her companions. We are awed  
At all the tales her memories tell,  
And what strange happenings befell.  
'T is said that she went to my last.  
Now this we know: that if she passed  
Into my last, and did n't hand  
My last, according to demand,  
'T was not my last, and we may say  
She was a deadhead in her day.  
My whole 's desired by every one  
From day to day, from sun to sun.  
For it we pray, we work, we earn;  
Look out for it at every turn.  
And when at last we've had our day,  
My last my first we'll have to say.

60

**I** MET my whole in a far-distant land,  
Shiftless and wild he roamed upon the  
sand.

“Are you my last? ” with sudden fear I  
said.

He only said my first, and wagged his  
head.

Yet but reverse the letters of my whole,  
A friend we see, a noble loving soul.

THE banners were waving, gems glittered  
and shone,  
When my first and my second ascended  
the throne,  
And peacefully reigned with a merciful  
sway  
In glory and splendor. But one summer  
day  
A message was brought to the court and  
the state  
That the king was not coming, the session  
must wait.  
A great consternation o'er all faces spread;  
They whispered in sorrow, "Alack for his  
head! "  
And the courtiers echoed, "Alas for his  
poll!  
Oh, who can now help him, his head is  
my whole! "



62

**I** KNOW a boy; his name 's my last.  
And yet he is my first,  
Because of all the scamps I know,  
He really is the worst.

I saw him tumble down to-day  
And on the pavement roll;  
I saw him fight another boy,  
I saw him get my whole.

His old cap was my whole, I think;  
A tattered coat he had,  
And yet, withal, he seemed to be  
A very merry lad.

**M**Y first, untidy though thou art,  
A noted writer, and a scribe,  
This trait of thine hath won my heart:  
Thy kindness to the feathered tribe.

My second dwells among the hills,  
Or lives on India's coral strand;  
And many hearts with fear it thrills  
When marching in a mighty band.

Sailing upon the summer seas,  
I watch the yachts and pleasure boats  
Spurred on by the propelling breeze—  
How gracefully my total floats!

**M**Y first is good when it's alone;  
The best ones are our mothers' ;  
And though we have it of our own,  
We're apt to take another's.

In many devious paths we stray  
When by my first we're beckoned;  
And by my first we're dragged away,  
Or else we are my second.

Sometimes my second may be shot,  
Which brings much grief and dole;  
But when my second's very hot  
It cannot be my whole.

**F**IRST sign of Liberty! My first has  
stood  
For half a hundred years, and still is good  
For half a hundred more. My last,  
though thin,  
Though old and bent, yet lithe and  
strong, has been  
Strung up for killing U. S. Army men,  
Perhaps deprived them of my whole; and  
when  
My whole is lacking, he would be a goose  
Who said most stovepipes are of any use.

WHEN hunting my last in the forest I heard  
In my first, as I passed, the song of a bird;  
If you seek in my whole you 'll discover  
the word.

**M**Y second once again is running clear,  
The young green of my whole begins to  
appear,  
All things my first to show that spring is  
here.

68

**M**Y whole was a queen  
Of disconsolate mien  
Who built a large pile in the past;  
In sorrow immersed,  
She vowed to my first,  
And that 's what she vowed to my last.

**I**F my last could be placed upon my first,  
The world would be the better;  
My whole must be carefully rehearsed  
If you 'd write a perfect letter.

My last has been laid upon my last;  
Bad men in my first are living;  
My whole 's a doctor who may be classed  
Among the pleasure-giving.



70

**M**Y first is the well known historical home  
Of a noted historical lady;  
My first in strange countries is oft known  
to roam,  
Or along a green path cool and shady.

My first is my lady's great pride and de-  
light,  
Yet they say the fair sex cannot do it;  
My first stamps the home, though 't is oft  
out of sight;  
When I was a child I went through it.

My last is a very queer book, so men say,  
So scarce that we rarely can find it;  
A most welcome caller, a place far away,  
'T is twisted, yet still we can wind it.

My whole, a great healer, thy power I  
allow,  
Though others thy help may be scorn-  
ing;  
For ere I go worldward, to thee I must  
bow,  
And beseech thine assistance each  
morning.

WHEN brave Leander was immersed,  
And through the waters passed,  
We 're very sure he was my first,  
But he was not my last.

And my whole garments which he wore,—  
This young enthusiast,—  
Laid in my first upon the shore,  
Would have become my last.

**M**Y first is my last, and my first is my  
whole;

My whole is my last and my first;

My whole is a ball I attempted to roll,

But I think of all balls 't was the worst.

**M**Y first is old and yellow,  
Withered and seamed by age;  
A most discerning fellow,  
Oracular and sage.

My last comes in the winter,  
But not in storm or blast;  
The sluggard and the printer  
Will often take my last.

My whole is a goddess of fabulous fame.  
Or a long line of articles, somewhat the  
same.

74

**A** KING had many wives,  
Of whom my first was one;  
He spoiled their happy lives,  
Apparently for fun.

And some he sent away,  
Of home and friends bereft;  
Of some, ere they could pray,  
The steel my last had cleft.

With each, successively,  
The King found some pretext  
For banishment; and he  
Would then my whole the next.

A TRAVELER rode hard and fast,  
Shivering with cold and dread.  
“If I can but reach my first in my last,  
I shall then be safe,” he said.

The way was rocky and dark and steep,  
My last was flying past;  
He sought for an inn where he might  
sleep,  
Sheltered from storm and blast.

He traveled on, through mud and mire,  
When, to his great delight,  
He saw an inn and a friendly fire,  
And went there for the night.

And from him shouts of laughter burst—  
He reveled in my whole,  
Which quickly made my last my first,  
And cheered his lonely soul.

76

NOW glory to the Lord of Hosts, from  
whom all glories are,  
And glory to our sovereign liege, King  
Henry of Navarre!

He was my first, a mighty man, a warrior  
for the right;  
He showed my whole, and went my first  
when he my last to fight.

Although my last is duty's cry, with some  
it goes for naught;  
In all adventures have my whole, if you  
would not be caught.

## 77

**H**IGH in my first they waved the flag,  
    'Mid shouts of wild applause;  
And soldiers brave marched to my first,  
    And fought to win the cause.

Without my second we could not  
    Assert that "Right is might,"  
Nor "Virtue is its own reward,"  
    Nor other proverbs trite.

My last we all admit to be  
    A blessing unsurpassed;  
Though some would give my last for all,  
    Some give all for my last.

We often pass my total by  
    With but a hurried look;  
And though we cannot read it, yet  
    We find it in a book.



**I** WAS sitting in my study—  
In my first the fire was ruddy,  
And I watched it as I idly clasped my  
whole;  
Though a sober man I 'm reckoned,  
To my lips I raised my second,  
For I never was addicted to the bowl.

I was waiting for my daughter,  
And at last I went and sought her—  
She has tresses like a golden aureole;  
But she hastily retreated,  
For her face was flushed and heated,  
And her pretty curls were clustering  
round my whole.

**M**Y first did my last  
To make my whole;  
His day is past,  
Poor, restless soul!

80

SOME things we could well do without;  
In my total we gather with care.  
If my last ever lived, I've no doubt  
That he is my first, now, somewhere.

**M**Y whole 's very narrow, but oft it may be  
A way of escape that is welcomed with  
glee.

My first, although swift, sometimes loses  
the race;

It is seen when we look a friend in the  
face.

My last we may estimate, measure, or  
guess,

The width of a coat and the length of a  
dress.

**A**LTHOUGH his course the captain could  
my whole to a degree,  
Called to my first, he was my last upon a  
stormy sea.

**Y**OU can turn my first, and it gives a nod;  
You can turn my last if you will;  
But the more you try to turn my whole,  
The more it stands stock-still.

84

WHEN the story about Looking Backward  
we read,  
We learn of a strange human being,  
Who turned to my first; unlike many  
deed,  
The trouble was caused by far-seeing.

In my second (though flowing with honey,  
I 've heard)  
I hope I shall ne'er be a dweller;  
And yet from my first to my second and  
third  
Is as far as from attic to cellar.

My whole comes in pairs, and is useful to  
all,  
Though its style may be out of all rea-  
son;  
Its fashions are changing, now large and  
now small,  
And we 're glad if it holds but a season.

THE sparkling wine was bright and red;  
't was tempting, but, alas!  
Full well I knew my whole, unseen, was  
lurking in the glass.  
And when, with wily argument, they offered it to me,  
I said I would not drink, and what I one,  
two, three!



86

**M**Y first, when full, holds many a pound;  
In my last of my first a duke was drowned.  
My first of Troy is much renowned;  
My last an obstacle oft is found;  
'Mid songs and dances they heard the  
    sound  
Of my whole one time when a king was  
    crowned.

## 87

**M**Y first can boast a head and tail,  
Has feathers and an eye,  
And sometimes wings; yet what avail?  
It cannot walk or fly.

And St. Paul was my first, we 're told;  
And my first may be bought  
In bottles,—but though rare and old,  
Its value 's almost naught.

Out of my last my first is made,  
My last is in a crown;  
And heroes wield its shining blade  
For glory and renown.

My whole, a marvel of brute force  
With human power combined;  
We never see it now, of course,  
We 've left it far behind.

**M**Y first, the Scriptures say, in Eden grew.  
Pronounce its letters—there's my whole  
for you!

My last name to myself I can't apply;  
My whole, tradition says, could never lie.

**M**Y last was very tall and very slim  
So all his people made a mock of him;  
Their jeerings worried him and grieved  
his soul;  
And when a clown with jest and laughter  
passed,  
And said, "Aha! you are my first, my  
last! "  
He said, "Don't speak to me; I am my  
whole."

90

**I** 'D oft be thankful, could I be my whole;  
And yet I would not always be my whole;  
I woo my first, that I may be my whole;  
Cockneys call her my last; but in my  
whole  
When to my first I go, I am my whole.

“**A** BIRD in the hand is worth two in the bush,”

How often we 've heard those old words,  
And my total, I have it on evidence strong,  
Is exactly the worth of two birds.

The dome of St. Paul's is my first, my  
last;

The dome of St. Peter's is, too;  
But if you should go there and see for  
yourself,  
You would say that this is n't true.

'TIS growing dusk, yet in the gathering  
gloom

I still can see two faces in the room.

On one face two of my first I can spy,

And on the other twenty I descry.

And of my second, one face shows me  
none

While I see five upon the other one.

My whole is on one face; but placed with  
care

Above the other rests on shining hair.

**M**Y first grows by the riverside,  
And in the fields it has been seen;  
'T is raised on poles, the country's pride,  
Dear to the peasant and the queen.

The men had many battles braved,  
And on my last I saw them sit,  
Beside the General, who waved  
My last, and read aloud a writ.

Beside a river flowing free,  
The spot marked by a grassy mound,  
My whole, nicknamed "Old Hickory,"  
Was long ago put in the ground.



**M**Y whole drops from trees.  
My last is a season,  
When as every one sees  
My whole drops from trees.  
My first is a breeze,  
And that is the reason  
My whole drops from trees.  
My last is a season.

**M**Y first is black and white and blue and  
red,  
'T is yellow, yes, and sometimes it is  
gray;  
'T is high and low, 't is restless and 't is  
dead,  
'T is writ for us to read and sing and  
play.

My last is greeted with delight and dread,  
The farmer's solace and the farmer's  
bane;  
Trode by his feet, yet worn upon his head,  
Refreshed and ruined by a drenching  
rain.

My whole lay deep beneath the waves,  
they said,  
But bravely rescued from the billow's  
roll,  
Though dripping wet upon the sands out-  
spread,  
With gladness and delight I pressed my  
whole.

**T**HE melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year;  
There 's not a flower on all the hills because my first is here.  
And through the keen and wintry air I watch the leaves my last;  
I shall not see my whole again until the winter 's past.

**T**HE jolly old farmer was my last;  
As he went to my first, o'er my total he  
passed.

**A**N artist stepped into an office one day,  
And held up my first for the clerk to survey;

“It ’s a good black and white,  
But it is n’t quite right,

For I just drew it off in a hurry last night.

It ’s not very fine,  
Nor of novel design,

But I hope ’t will be taken and hung on  
the line.”

He had scarcely gone out when a lady  
came by,

And she stopped in to ask if my second  
was dry.

“’T was a canvas,” she said,

“And it fills me with dread,

To think that the colors have faded or  
spread.”

Well, I sat there all day,

In that very same way,

Amazed at the endless and changing array  
Of my whole that appeared in a motley  
display;

Percalé and piqué,

Some green and some gray,

Worn in all colors and worn in all shades,  
Worn by the ladies and worn by the maids,  
    By large and by small,  
    By short and by tall,  
Till I ran away home to get out of it all.

99

**A**S my first was walking with weary step,  
on a drear and lonely road,  
With a heavy heart and a downcast glance,  
of my second be bore a load;  
He saw my third, he was soon my third,  
he had reached his welcome goal,  
And with song and dance and merry jest,  
he listened to my whole.

**B**ENEATH the gaslight's brilliant glare  
The feast was spread with dainties rare.  
My whole was set with silver fine,  
And shining glass and sparkling wine.  
A wise professor, old and staid,  
Was talking to a chattering maid.  
In ancient lore she was not versed,  
She was my last, and he my first;  
While I across the table sat,  
Wishing I could enjoy her chat.



OLD Deacon Griggs made money fast;  
His greatest virtue was my last.  
But his son John turned out my whole,  
Which grieved the deacon's sordid soul;  
For hast'ning to my first, the son  
Disbursed the gold that Griggs had won.

**A**N ancient family of Chaldee  
Went from my first to Canaan's land.  
My second I can never see,  
But I can hold it in my hand.  
My whole is found on the ocean's bed,  
Though often on pillows he rests his head.

103

UPON my last I saw a yacht;  
My last is smooth, my first is not.  
My first felt Alexander's blade,  
My last has formed a strong blockade;  
Both can be broken, cut or made;  
And when you see my whole displayed  
Upon my last, oh, then beware!  
To venture near it do not dare.

**M**Y first is often broken, 't is so frail;  
Sometimes it has a head, sometimes a tail;  
Lives in the water, worn upon the hand,  
Dooms the offender, represents a land.  
My last is found on mankind and on  
brute,  
Possessed alike by fish and fowl and fruit.  
The daring mariner who seeks the pole,  
Failing to find it, may secure my whole.

105

A SOLDIER and a sailor met  
One day upon the shore;  
And one was my first with a coat of my  
last,  
And my whole the other wore.

**M**AID of Athens, ere we part,  
Hear my first with tender heart;  
Ere another hour is past,  
Let me be of thee my last.  
Then behold my very soul  
Filled o'erflowing with my whole.

THE yacht was flying fast; the day was  
fair;  
The sky was clear and blue; and my first,  
white  
Upon the sailors and upon the sea.  
I stood upon the deck, and with my last  
I saw the distant shores of Barnegat,  
I watched the heaving billows roll and  
toss,  
I thought that we were going to my whole.

**I**T was my whole, a thunder-storm had  
burst;

My last was fierce, and filled us with my  
first.



A COLLEGE youth toward magic yearned,  
And all the wizard's arts he learned.  
He had the mumbo-jumbo pat,  
And made my first in his silk hat,

Sorcery, black art, and all the rest  
He could accomplish with the best;  
And when, as wizard, he fell flat,  
He made my last in his silk hat.

Dressed for the street, he chanced to pass  
One day, before his cheval-glass;  
With faultless garb and new cravat,  
He saw my whole in his silk hat.

WHEN Pope remarked, "Whatever is, is  
right,"

His words were half my first. When  
Hamlet said,

"To be or not to be," my first was part  
Of his great speech, and even now

My first is plain before your eyes. My  
last,

Provides a home and sustenance for all;

A welcome shout; an exclamation used

By country folk or those of little wit.

My whole my first my last.

III

NO one can work as fast  
As my first my last.  
My whole presents at will  
An enormous bill.

## 112

WHEN from my ivied casement I look down  
Upon the garden bathed in sunset glow  
I see my first ranged in imposing rows  
Yet distant as the poles,

I hear the noise  
Of merry children romping in their glee;  
I hear their laughter and I hear my last.

A hero of my youthful days there was,  
Who, with inquiring mind and hatchet  
sharp,  
Upon my whole reached everlasting fame.

113

**M**Y first was ground beneath the oppressor's  
wheel,  
Subjected unto barbarous tyrannies;  
With ears cut off, encaged in netted wire  
Into a burning fiery furnace thrust.  
My first take from my second, and my  
whole  
Remains.

My second is a faithful friend.  
Gaily with him across the moors I go  
From morn to dewy eve.

I went one day  
To visit an old man. Beside the fire  
He sate. His well-loved pipe, made of  
my whole,  
He smoked in calm and undisturbed con-  
tent.

**M**Y first 's a very common thing,—  
It has been worn by cat and king;  
Part of my lady's fine attire,  
The soldier's pride, the tramp's desire.

My second, with a vacant stare,  
Jaunty red cap and curling hair,  
Once at a gay and festive scene,  
Captured a bright and smiling queen.  
My whole is very often used  
To hit a beast that 's much abused.

115

**M**Y dogs I love, my horses I adore;  
They 're much to me, and yet my last is  
more.

And though my first is less, my whole I  
know,

Has ever been my last's unconquered foe.

**A** BRAVE man looked forth and a figure  
he saw;  
'T was bound to my first—he surveyed it  
with awe.  
And as it was fast disappearing from  
sight,  
He began to my second with furious  
might.  
An often-fought foe, very hard to control,  
In the Scriptures we read of the fall of  
my whole.



117

**I**N certain realms men have to bring  
My first to earth before their king;  
In others, they are only bound  
To make my second touch the ground.  
My whole 's a curious little man—  
One of a most amusing clan.

**T**HOUGH some one spoke this truthful  
word,

“The pen is mightier than the sword,”  
Without my first, you ’ll all agree,  
Of little use the pen would be.

Deep in my second, long ago,  
Young Mr. Green was said to throw  
A victim innocent of wrong,  
The hero of a well-known song.

What products of what mighty brains!  
What wond’rous books my whole con-  
tains!  
What reams of prose and verse! Yet all  
Tinged with the bitterness of gall!

119

**E**AGERLY I my first the pack  
So that we might pursue the game;  
I made a good deal, but the lack  
Of interest made the sport seem tame.

My second ladies richly gowned  
May see in patterns of their silk,  
My second also may be found  
In terrapin and buttermilk.

My whole will fly right merrily  
O'er many a cold and chilly mile;  
'T is only one, yet verily  
'T would equally describe a file.

120

**M**Y first bears many a noble name,  
Two letters add, 't is still the same.

I saw my second in dark waters  
It was the last of noble daughters.

My whole, though very picturesque,  
May be quite ugly and grotesque;  
And Shakespeare used the word to mean  
The witches in a ghastly scene.

# ANSWERS

## AT THE SIGN OF THE SPHINX

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